

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 070247

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SUBJECT: NBC-TV "TODAY SHOW" INTERVIEW WITH HELMUT

-- SONNENFELDT, APRIL 5, L974

FOLLOWING TRANSCRIPT OF "TODAY SHOW" APRIL 5 INTERVIEW WITH
SONNENFELDT:

BEGIN TEXT:

BARBARA WALTERS: WHEN SECRETARY OF STATE HENRY KISSINGER
RETURNED FROM HIS TRIP TO MOSCOW LAST WEEK, THE PRESS RE-
PORTS WERE SOMEWHAT DISILLUSIONING. IT WAS SAID THAT THE
SECRETARY HAD NOT ACHIEVED THE CONCEPTUAL BREAKTHROUGH HE
HAD HOPED FOR AND PEOPLE THEN WONDERED, ARE THE SOVIETS,
CONSCIOUS OF PRESIDENT NIXON'S DOMESTIC PROBLEMS, TAKING
A NEW AND TOUGHER BARGAINING LINE; DID DR. KISSINGER INDEED
NOT FIND THEM WILLING TO TAKE THE STEPS TOWARD THE ARMS
AGREEMENT HE'D HOPED FOR.

WE WANT TO DISCUSS THIS NOW WITH ONE OF SECRETARY KISSINGER'S
CLOSEST ASSOCIATES, THE MAN WHO WAS INVOLVED IN THE
MOSCOW TALKS AND THE TRADE AGREEMENTS OF THE PAST AND OUR
UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 02 STATE 070247

RELATIONS WITH CHINA AND WITH OUR EUROPEAN POLICY. HE IS

HELMUT SONNENFELDT, COUNSELOR OF THE STATE DEPARTMENT, AND HE IS IN OUR WASHINGTON STUDIO NOW WITH NBC NEWS CORRESPONDENT RICHARD VALERIANI.

IF I MAY, I'D LIKE TO START OFF THE QUESTIONING. MR. SONNENFELDT, YOU HAVE SAID YOU FEEL THE NEWS REPORTS AFTER DR. KISSINGER'S TRIP WERE OVERLY NEGATIVE ABOUT HIS ACCOMPLISHMENTS THERE. THE SOVIET HAS CRITICIZED OUR PRESS HERE FOR EMPHASIZING THE NEGATIVE. CAN YOU TELL US WHY THIS REPORT CAME OUT? WAS IT SOMETHING THAT DR. KISSINGER HIMSELF INDUCED? AND, IF YOU DO FEEL THAT IT IS NOT NEGATIVE, WHAT SPECIFICALLY DID DR. KISSINGER ACCOMPLISH DO YOU THINK THAT HAS NOT BEEN REPORTED?

MR. SONNENFELDT: WELL, GOOD MORNING, FIRST OF ALL. IT'S HARD TO SAY WHY THE REPORTING ON THE TRIP WAS QUITE THE WAY IT WAS. THERE OBVIOUSLY WAS A GOOD DEAL OF CONVERSATION ABOUT IT ON THE AIR PLANE COMING AND GOING, AND SINCE THEN. BUT MY JUDGMENT WOULD BE THAT THIS TRIP TO MOSCOW LAST WEEK, COMPARED TO TWO EARLIER TRIPS THAT WERE INTENDED TO PREPARE THE GROUND FOR SUBSEQUENT SUMMIT MEETINGS, ACCOMPLISHED A GOOD DEAL OF WHAT IT SET OUT TO DO -- WHICH IS TO IDENTIFY SOME ISSUES AND SUBJECT MATTERS ON WHICH THERE COULD BE COME PROFITABLE DISCUSSIONS AND PERHAPS SOME ADDITIONAL AGREEMENTS AT THE SUMMIT MEETING. BUT ALSO TO IDENTIFY ISSUES WHERE THERE STILL REMAIN SUBSTANTIAL DIFFERENCES OF VIEW AND OPINION. AND IN THAT SENSE TO SET A CHALLENGE TO SEE IF PERHAPS SOME FURTHER PROGRESS CAN BE MADE BEFORE THE SUMMIT DISCUSSIONS OR AT THE SUMMIT DISCUSSIONS. CLEARLY THE STRATEGIC ARMS TALKS, THE SO-CALLED SALT TALKS, WERE ONE OF THE AREAS WHERE SOME QUITE SUBSTANTIAL DIFFERENCES REMAINED AND WERE IDENTIFIED IN MOSCOW. IT NOW REMAINS TO BE SEEN WHETHER IT IS POSSIBLE TO NARROW THOSE DIFFERENCES SUFFICIENTLY TO ACHIEVE A MEANINGFUL AND MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE AGREEMENT THIS YEAR.

SO I WOULD SAY ON THE WHOLE THE TRIP ACCOMPLISHED A GREAT DEAL OF WHAT IT SET OUT TO DO, BUT IT DID COME UP AGAINST SOME SUBSTANTIAL DIFFERENCES OF OPINION AND VIEW IN THE POSITIONS OF THE TWO SIDES AND TO THAT EXTENT IT WAS UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 03 STATE 070247

PERHAPS DISAPPOINTING. BUT I WOULDN'T MYSELF CHARACTERIZE IT AS A FAILURE AS A GREAT DEAL OF OUR PRESS COMMENTARY HAS TENDED TO DO.

MR. VALERIANI: MR. SONNENFELDT, WASN'T PART OF THE PROBLEM THAT THE SECRETARY HIMSELF SET HIMSELF UP BY SAYING WHEN HE ARRIVED IN MOSCOW, "WE EXPECT TO MAKE CONCRETE PROGRESS ON CERTAIN ISSUES," AND THEN DID NOT HAVE ANY

CONCRETE PROGRESS TO POINT TO AFTERWARDS?

MR. SONNENFELDT: WELL, I DON'T KNOW, DICK, WHAT THE PRE-CISE QUOTATION WAS THAT YOU HAVE IN MIND. OBVIOUSLY, IF ONE GOES ON A TRIP OF THIS KIND AND EXPECTS TO MEET FOR

MANY HOURS AS WE IN FACT DID WITH GENERAL SECRETARY BREZHNEV AND GROMYKO AND SO ON, YOU HAVE SOME EXPECTATION THAT THIS WILL PRODUCE SOME RESULTS, AND I THINK THAT EXPECTATION DID EXIST BEFORE THE TRIP. I MUST SAY THAT EVEN ON SALT -- THE STRATEGIC ARMS TALKS -- THIS WASN'T ENTIRELY WITHOUT SOME PROGRESS. I THINK THE DISCUSSION, WHICH WAS VERY INTENSE AND QUITE LONG DRAWN OUT, DID SERVE SOME VERY USEFUL PURPOSES. BUT IT'S TRUE THAT THE EXPECTATIONS BEFOREHAND WERE PERHAPS SOMEWHAT HIGHER THAN THEY SHOULD HAVE BEEN.

MS. WALTERS: MR. SONNENFELDT, WE'VE HEARD A GREAT DEAL ABOUT WATERGATE HAVING MADE A DIFFERENCE THIS TIME AND THAT THE SOVIETS BROUGHT UP WATERGATE AND EXPRESSED SOME FEELING ABOUT THE PRESIDENT'S POSITION IN THIS COUNTRY. DID THAT INDEED HAPPEN IN YOUR TALKS?

MR. SONNENFELDT: WELL, I DON'T RECALL THAT WATERGATE AS SUCH WAS BROUGHT UP. THE SOVIETS ARE CONSCIOUS OF THE FACT THAT FOR ONE THING THERE IS SOME LEGISLATION IN THE CONGRESS THAT THEY'RE QUITE INTERESTED IN IN THE TRADE FIELD THAT HAS RUN INTO CONSIDERABLE DIFFICULTY. I'M NOT ENTIRELY SURE WHAT THEY ATTRIBUTE THAT TO, BUT IN ANY CASE THEY NOTICE THE FACT THAT THIS LEGISLATION HAS NOT MOVED FORWARD. AND SO I THINK THEY DO HAVE SOME QUESTIONS IN THEIR OWN MINDS JUST HOW MUCH WE ARE ABLE TO MOVE IN THIS PERIOD OF GREAT PREOCCUPATION WITH WATERGATE AND ITS UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 04 STATE 070247

ASSOCIATED PROBLEMS. SO I THINK IN THAT SENSE THE ISSUE AROSE, YES.

MR. VALERIANI: DO YOU GET THE FEELING THAT THE SOVIETS ARE HOLDING BACK ON THE POLICY OF DETENTE, THE RELAXATION OF TENSIONS, BECAUSE OF THE THREAT OF IMPEACHMENT HANGING OVER THE PRESIDENT? THEY ARE WAITING TO SEE WHAT HAPPENS BEFORE THEY MAKE ANOTHER MOVE?

MR. SONNENFELDT: I'D HAVE TO ANSWER THAT QUESTION AT TWO DIFFERENT LEVELS. I THINK IN A GENERAL SENSE THEY ARE NOT HOLDING BACK. IN FACT, ONE OF THE THINGS THAT WAS STRIKING IN MOSCOW WAS THE AMOUNT OF PUBLIC PRESS PLAY IN THE SOVIET PRESS BY THEIR STANDARDS THAT THE KISSINGER VISIT WAS GIVEN, AND THE IDENTIFICATION OF GENERAL SECRE-

TARY BREZHNEV PERSONALLY WITH THE VISIT AND ALSO WITH THE FORTHCOMING SUMMIT MEETING WITH PRESIDENT NIXON. NOW, THAT IN THE SOVIET UNION IS A SIGNAL OF CONSIDERABLE INTEREST IN THE CONTINUATION OF THE RELATIONSHIP, AND THE WORD "IRREVERSIBLE" WAS USED IN THE FINAL COMMUNIQUE AT THE END OF THE KISSINGER VISIT IN DESCRIBING THE TREND OF THE LAST SEVERAL YEARS IN SOVIET/AMERICAN RELATIONS.

SO I THINK AT THAT GENERAL LEVEL THERE IS CONTINUED SOVIET INTEREST AND I THINK COMMITMENT TO THE CONTINUATION OF THE POLICIES OF THE LAST SEVERAL YEARS. I THINK IN SPECIFIC CASES -- THE TRADE RELATIONSHIP IS ONE OF THE INSTANCES I'VE ALREADY CITED -- THEY ARE PERHAPS CONCERNED ABOUT JUST HOW FAR WE ARE ABLE TO GO AT THE PRESENT TIME. AND SO I THINK IN THAT SENSE THEY ARE BIDDING THEIR TIME AND CHECKING THEIR BIDDING A BIT.

MS. WALTERS: MR. SONNENFELDT, YOU ARE ALSO ONE OF THE SECRETARY'S ADVISERS AND CONSULTANTS IN EUROPEAN AFFAIRS, WHICH HAS SEEMED TO BE RATHER DISMAL THIS YEAR, WITH THE EUROPEAN COUNTRIES SEEMING TO ORGANIZE AGAINST THE UNITED STATES. YOU VISITED EUROPE AFTER THE SOVIET UNION. HOW DO YOU FIND THINGS THERE NOW?

MR. SONNENFELDT: I DIDN'T QUITE HEAR YOUR QUESTION, BARBARA. COULD YOU REPEAT IT?
UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 05 STATE 070247

(MS. WALTERS QUESTION WAS REPEATED)

MR. SONNENFELDT: WELL, I THINK ACTUALLY ON OUR STOP ON THE WAY TO MOSCOW IN BONN FOR A MEETING WITH CHANCELLOR BRANDT AND FOREIGN MINISTER SCHEEL AND THEN ON THE WAY BACK FROM MOSCOW IN LONDON FOR A MEETING WITH PRIME MINISTER WILSON AND FOREIGN SECRETARY CALLAGHAN, THEN MY OWN VISIT TO NATO SUBSEQUENTLY, I THINK THE ATMOSPHERE WAS IN MANY WAYS BETTER THAN IT HAD BEEN. I THINK PEOPLE IN EUROPE HAD BECOME QUITE CONSCIOUS OF THE DANGERS OF THE TREND IN THE RELATIONSHIP THAT HAD BEEN EMERGING OVER THE LAST SEVERAL MONTHS. I HAVE SOME HOPE THAT THIS CONSCIOUSNESS OF THE DIFFICULTIES AND DANGERS WILL LEAD US IN MORE POSITIVE DIRECTIONS IN THE FUTURE.

MS. WALTERS: THANK YOU, MR. SONNENFELDT . . .
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